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NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MEDICINE

PIONEERS OF THE MEDICAL MOTION PICTURE
IN THE
UNITED STATES

An Exhibit
at the
National Library of Medicine
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The history of the medical motion picture has been curiously neglected by both scholars and collectors in the United States. There are very few retrospective articles, no published definitive history or bibliography, and few of the early medical films are known to have survived the hazards of fire, projection and neglect. Unsuspected medical prints which would illuminate medical motion picture history may be hidden in attics, desk drawers or other hiding places.

The NLM has established an archival collection of medical films for the purpose of preservation and research. The new NLM building, now under construction, will provide facilities for the viewing of motion pictures by individuals using the Library just as books and journals are now used. The Library is now in process of acquiring all published material in this field and is furnishing reference service concerning films. The Library would welcome any information on the location of prints of historical importance or published or unpublished information on the early history of the field. It is earnestly hoped that further loss of irreplaceable medical material can be prevented by the establishment of this central repository.

The current exhibit presents some of the highlights in the careers of the pioneers in this area, ending approximately with the year 1919. It does not claim to be definitive; in fact, it is hoped that omissions or errors ~~will be~~ drawn to the attention of the Library. Important contributors to the medical film may have been overlooked here, either because no biography has been printed or because no bibliographical lead was found.

The following are represented in the exhibit:

Julius Mount Bleyer (1859-1915) Outlined medical applications of the motion picture when it was still in the experimental stage, 1895.

Daniel LeRay Borden (1887 -) Pioneered in the filming of surgical operative technique, 1917.

William J. Brownlow. Early worker in animated drawing films, 1916.

Alexis Carrel (1873-1944) Recorded vascular suture operation, 1912.

Walter Greenough Chase (1859-1919) Personally filmed motion pictures of epileptic seizures, 1905.

Charles Henry Duncan (1866-1942) Suggested filming of operations, utilizing mirror projection to adjoining room, 1908.

Allan McLane Hamilton (1848-1919) Produced motion pictures of pathological gaits, circa 1900.

Julius H. Jacobson (1879-1918) Demonstrated abdominal surgery teaching film, 1913.

Charles Hubbard Judd (1873-1946) Psychologist who recorded and measured eye movements from motion pictures, 1903-1904.

John English McWhorter and Frederick Prime, Jr. Microcinematography of chick embryos and tissues, 1913.

Rudolph Matas (1860-1957) Supported use of cinematography in medical education and research, 1911.

Eadweard Muybridge (1830-1904) English-born pioneer in chronophotography, which preceded and contributed to the development of motion pictures, 1884-1887.

Robert Lincoln Watkins (1863-1934) Microcinematography of blood corpuscles and microscopic life, 1897.

Theodore Herman Weisenburg (1876-1934) Films of nervous and mental diseases, 1908?-1912.

Clinical Film Company, New York City. Produced about 200 motion pictures between 1915 and 1917, most of them depicting operative surgery.

Instruction Laboratory, U. S. Army Medical Museum. The unprecedented wartime urgency, together with progressive administrators, caused a considerable acceleration in the production of medical films.